

JOHN ALDEN AND PRISCILLA MULLINS

"John Alden, born about 1599, died Sept. 12, 1687, Duxbury, Mass., married about 1622, Priscilla, daughter of William and Alice Mullins. This marriage was the second or third in the colony. John Alden was not a member of the Leyden Company, but, as Bradford states, 'was hired a cooper, at Southampton, where the ship victualled; and, being a hopeful young man, was much desired, but left to his own liking to go or stay when he came here.' He was thus about twenty-one when he signed the Compact in the cabin of the Mayflower (the seventh signer), and, electing to stay, married Priscilla. John Alden proved a most desirable member of the Pilgrim Company, as is shown by his life of manly usefulness. He was one of the eight undertakers in 1627; was chosen one of the Assistants in 1633, and was annually re-elected until 1641, in which year he was elected Deputy from Duxbury to the General Court, and continued to serve as such until 1650, when he was again chosen a member of the Council and so continued until his death, having been for twenty-two years the senior member of the Council. In 1646 he was made a member of the Council of War for Plymouth, and served in that capacity also, for many years. In 1656-1657, and 1658 he was treasurer of the Colony, having succeeded Myles Standish in that office. In 1687, at his death, he was the last survivor of the forty-one signers of the Compact.****

"The romance of youth, love, and early orphanage has for three hundred years centered about the memory of Priscilla, the Pilgrim maid whose love story and marriage have been perpetuated in poetry by one of her most distinguished descendants, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Her maiden name is variously spelled, by historians, Mullins, Molines, Mullines, Molineaux, and even DuMoulins. Dr. Baird, in his history of THE HUGUENOT EMIGRATION TO AMERICA, asserts positively that the Molines family were Huguenots. Priscilla certainly was a Leyden Pilgrim; therefore, it is logical to suppose that the spoke dark-haired little maid was something of a linguist for her time- that she must have spoken Dutch, the language of the people among whom she lived, and that her parents had been careful to teach her their own native French. Her principal tongue, of course, was the English of the Pilgrims, for they were chiefly British. John Alden being a comely person (he possessed blue eyes, flaxen hair, and was known as 'The Saxon Giant'), it is not surprising that when he was sent by Miles Standish to solicit her hand in marriage, she preferred the messenger to the message.

"The date of the marriage of John And Priscilla about 1622 plays havoc with Longfellow's picturesque description of the gallant John's chivalry in placing the little bride on his snow-white bull, covered 'with handsome broadcloth', for the stern truth must be told that Edward Winslow, returning to New England from old England in the ship, Charity, in 1624, brought, 'beside a good supply, three heifers and a bull, the first beginning of any cattle of that kind in the land.'